

STATINTL

Periscoping the Nation

Washington Wire

CAPITOL HILL — Is House Republican leader Charles Halleck losing his iron grip on the GOP rank and file? Insiders here say yes. He "lost" 30 Republican votes on the depressed-areas bill and 34 on the \$1.25 minimum-wage law. And a good number even ducked the caucus he called to fight the wage bill. Their excuse: Ceremonies at George Washington University. The last straw: The star at that show was John F. Kennedy.

HOUSE CLOAKROOM — And here's why former House GOP leader Joe Martin bolted to support the Kennedy minimum-wage bill. Labor lobbyists convinced him that passing the bill would put a big dent in Halleck's prestige. Martin has never forgiven his successor for his part in the palace rebellion that unseated him.

CAPITOL HILL — Congressmen in the know about the Cuba debacle claim Adolf A. Berle will soon be out of his job as JFK's special assistant on Latin America. Berle, they say, was the Presidential adviser who pushed hardest for the ill-fated venture.

Pentagon Pipeline

DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS — The nerve center in the Pentagon basement reports Russia is once more testing ICBM's at its Tyura Tam base in Asia. No shots from there were detected for eight months, but now two or three a week are blasting off. The "boys in the basement" also think the missiles are a new model far superior to our Atlas. It was known that the Soviets had more ICBM's than we did, but up to this point there was no real clue they were ahead in operational quality.

AIR FORCE HQ — Intelligence experts here now think that Soviet spaceman Maj. Yuri Gagarin piloted his space ship during part of his flight. A just-completed study of Soviet and other data indicates to them that, to slow his ship, Gagarin sent it into long glides in and out of the upper atmosphere.

PENTAGON — The most hush-hush program here: Project Owl. Top generals and officials are involved and about all that can be revealed is that it is designed to bolster NATO's nuclear defenses, and still prevent "accidental" atomic war.

Behind the Headlines

WHITE HOUSE — A couple of names are under discussion to succeed Allen Dulles as CIA chief. But despite what you may hear, J. Edgar Hoover's is not one. Neither is Robert Kennedy's nor Sen. William Fulbright's. One that is: Gen. James Gavin, now Ambassador to France.

STATE DEPARTMENT — Watch for the U.S. to step up its diplomatic offensive to test Khrushchev's talk about improved relations. The plan: To ask for embassies in the Ukraine and Byelorussia (both U.N. members since 1945). A turn-down from the Kremlin would show up Moscow's claims that the two Soviet republics are "independent." We already have made a similar move with the "independent" Asian state of Outer Mongolia (THE PERISCOPE, May 8).

WHITE HOUSE — Something brand-new has been added to Presidential diplomacy, this time by Jacqueline Kennedy. She personally selected the official gift for visiting Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba and his wife. This was a first for a First Lady, as far as anyone knows. (State Department protocol men traditionally handle the chores.) Her choice: A hi-fi stereo radio-phonograph and tape recorder.

Where Are They Now?

COLD SPRING HARBOR, N.Y. — A 7-year-old towhead named Archie moved into the White House 30 years ago and for the next seven years, like Caroline Kennedy (see page 65), was a pint-size creator of king-size headlines, breaking up diplomatic receptions by sliding down banisters, galloping about the Executive Mansion's grounds.